Iowa Department of Human Services
CHILD CARE CENTER EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE

Name of Center: College Community Early Childhood Center **Enrollment:** 177 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 50769

Street: 125 Prairie Hill CT SW **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52404 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 401 76th AVE SW, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52404

Director's Name: Kathleen Schulte **Phone Number:** 319-848-5296

On-Site Supervisor(s): Erin Hill **E-Mail:** kschulte@crprairie.org

Date(s) of Visit: 04-29-2025

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** **Off Year Visit** **Administrative Change**

LICENSING VISITS

New Application **Re-Application** X **NA**

Signed Application (470-0722) Received **Yes** **No** X **NA** **Date Signed:**

FIRE INSPECTION **State** X **Local** **NA** **Is Fire Inspection Approved?** X **Yes** **No** **NA**

Date Inspected: 09-27-2023

Comments :

LICENSE TYPE: X **Child Care** **Preschool (ages 3-5 meets three hours or less per day)**

Financial Type: X Profit Non-Profit NA

Accredition: Accredited X NAEYC NSACA Other NA

Program Serves: X Infants (0-23 mo.) X 2 Years X Preschool-Age X School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	18	18	263	81	380
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 04-01-2025 to 04-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 05-01-2025

I. IF CURRENT LICENSE IS PROVISIONAL, IDENTIFY THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

College Community Early Childhood Center (CCECC) commenced operations in August, 2019. CCECC is located in a building which is part of the College Community School District. CCECC operates several licensed childcare programs which are all part of the College Community School District. During the summer, some full days of emergency closing and some breaks, this program has the ability to combine with other CCECC sites to provide full day child care. Specifically, CCECC provides early learning programming and childcare to children age infant through school-age. Current enrollment is 177.

Multi-site director Kathleen "Kathy" Schulte has a MA degree in early childhood elementary education. Ms. Schulte has over 25 years of experience working with children including during her work as a school principal and early childhood teacher. Assistant director/ CCECC on-site supervisor is Erin Hill. Ms. Hill has a MA degree in early childhood special education and over 10 years of experience working with children.

On 4/29/2025, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

CCECC operates multiple sites throughout the community that offer a variety of childcare and early learning programming opportunities to help meet the needs of children and families. CCECC is well-established and accepts a variety of funding sources.

This location has been in operation since 2019. In August 2025, this program will be celebrating their 6th year of providing early learning. Congratulations!

CCECC has a history of participation in quality initiatives. Several CCECC sites have achieved and maintain NAEYC accreditation. The College Community School District is one of only eight school districts across the country recognized as a 2022 Fall “Lighthouse System” by AASA, The School Superintendents Association. College Community was recognized in the area of: Redesign for Early Learning. College Community Schools received special recognition for Strength in Early Learning Partnerships in Service for Highly Diverse Community.

CCECC has the following website for families and the community to access information about their programs: https://www.crprairie.org/.

According to the family handbook the mission of CCECC is "...Guided by high expectations, partnerships with our schools and families, and extensive knowledge of child development, Early Learning Staff provide a broad range of educational opportunities that enable students to enter Elementary School with the skills necessary to ensure quality learning today for tomorrow."

CCECC is non-profit and operates under a Board of Directors. Ownership and management of the program has remained

consistent. The seasoned management team includes multi-site early childhood principal-director Ms. Schulte, assistant director Erin Hill, administrative assistant Jenna Langhurst, multi-site school-age coordinator Whitney Hinrichs, and site specific supervisor. Ms. Schulte and the entire CCECC management team are organized, and in turn, CCECC programs operate smoothly. Ms. Schulte and the entire CCECC management team have extremely noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed and securely maintained as required. There is a collaboration among all CCECC sites to share materials, curriculum, joys, challenges, and ideas/planning.

Since the last monitoring visit, CCECC has retained as well as hired some new staff. CCECC has 12 staff currently participating in TEACH and Wages. Many staff have or are working towards CDAs and/or advanced degrees in early childhood development. Documentation indicates that employees often complete annual professional growth training that exceeds Iowa Code requirements. CCECC has continuously updated onboarding procedures and orientation for new staff, annual professional development for all staff and increased transfer of knowledge opportunities. CCECC continues to understand and advocate for the link between education and quality programming. Management discussed how bonuses, vacation/sick buy-back opportunities, health/wellness benefits, and uniquely created warm areas for daily staff breaks/lunch are all part of the program's operations to support, acknowledge, reward and celebrate the hard work staff do. Management also continues to display their appreciation through staff shout-outs, special food days and classroom door decorating contests.

CCECC continues efforts at optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has organized parent-staff/program information centers, offers regular program newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources (e.g. use of App), and supports family programming activities (e.g. lending literacy-library program, registration events, chocolate at pick-up, conferences). Parents are invited to be part of the PBIS leadership team. CCECC regularly conducts a family survey and continues to note much program satisfaction with positive family feedback. Throughout several classrooms, posted notes of gratitude for staff from families were observed.

Building and grounds are well-maintained. Since the last review, additional hand washing sinks were installed in areas. CCECC as a collaborative partnership with the school district which allows additional access to school administrative staff, school nurse, and kitchen personnel help ensure the building and grounds are safe, sanitary, and hazard free each day. There is an AED on-site. The program has access to their own spacious on-site storage sheds. There is an on-site holding kitchen with meals prepared at a neighboring school and then transported to the CCECC. During the monitoring visit, licensing observed custodial staff at this location to be highly vested in the maintenance of the building including receptacle emptying, replenishing hand washing/toileting materials, and cleaning/disinfecting. Management discussed how strategic efforts continue to be put forth to help ensure a continuous quality environment is provided.

Upon entering the center, an electronic board displays CCECC information including important dates to remember with upcoming events. Spacious center hallways have been transformed into inviting areas (e.g. natural light, soft seating, work seating, issues of NAEYC "Young Children" professional journal, a program-family-child lending library) for enrichment activities to take place, for staff to relax on break, for staff to engage in classroom planning, for one to one staff/child work to occur, and for families to stop and play/learn at drop-off and pick-up.

Child areas continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner keeping learning at the forefront. Children's accomplishments (e.g. paintings, sketches, cutting work) were observed to be celebrated throughout the center! CCECC curriculum is designed to help children become lifelong learners. Curriculum is a combination of developmentally appropriate learning strategies including Iowa Early Learning Standards, Creative Curriculum (e.g. gold, cloud), Everyday Math Enrichment, Second Step, Jolly Phonics, Heggerty Phonics Awareness, Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports, SPARK after-school, Mind Works and homework assistance. Curriculum also incorporates off-site field trip experiences (e.g. Super Skate, bowling, local parks, Bloomsbury Farm, Children's Museum) on-site guest speaker events (e.g. storyteller, library, Kona Ice, Peppy's Ice Cream, Music on the Move), themed days (e.g. water play), optional enrichments experiences (e.g. Daytime Dancers, Little Sports, running club, lending book library, Book Fairs), seasonal parties (e.g. Winterfest) and age defined outdoor play spaces. Communication between children and staff is done verbally, with picture cues, and through sign language. CCECC 2024 summer programming and school-year 2024-2025 enrollment are well underway with established waiting lists. Management discussed several future goals related to curriculum that will be commencing with the start of the 2025-2026 school-year (e.g. whole rooms dedicated to study approach).

CCECC programs have emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. CCECC programs have successfully navigated through the 2008 Linn County Flood, 2019 winter Polar Vortex, 2019 health (covid-19) pandemic, 8/10/20 Derecho Storm, 2021 food supply issues, 2022 infant formula shortages, 2023 air quality alerts and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

CCECC sites collaborate well with many community partners including local businesses, health professionals, early access professionals, TIES, head start, other local school districts, various non-profit organizations, ECI, and CCR&R. CCECC applies for and receives grants (e.g. expansion 2022, expansion 2023). Management discussed being proud of their continued expansion efforts to help meet the needs of the community and their waiting lists as well as their continued innovation to be able to always do what's best for kids.

Each child is engaged in a daily health check upon arrival for early detection of apparent illness, communicable disease, or unusual condition or behavior which may adversely affect the child or the group. The program has policies and procedures in place for hand washing, diapering, cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing. Cleaning checklists and reminders are posted in various areas.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were observed to be nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Areas of study in the center included rocks, gardening, and insects. It was noteworthy that one child (room 303) shared with licensing that while he liked gardening, he very much enjoyed the recent lessons on recycling because he got to make a lots of things including a robot. A real child testimony that fun learning is happening! Throughout the classrooms, children have access to an array of materials (e.g. games, books, sensory items, imaginative play options, building materials, crafts) that encourage innovative play. Activities offered and observed were many (e.g. infant cares, nap/quiet rest, outdoor play, book reading, name writing practice, center play experiences, small group work, group discussions, craft-skill work). Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Routine transitions (e.g. clean-up, face-to-name checks, lunch/food service rituals, nap/quiet rest preparation) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement, utilizing PBIS teachings when needed and encouraging social graces. Children responded well to staff and appeared to be truly enjoying their day.

IV. IDENTIFY THE ASPECTS OF OPERATION THAT FALL BELOW THE STANDARDS REVIEWED:

None noted.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

On the outdoor playground, trim the bolts used to secure the downspouts.

In the preschool-age restroom areas, please ensure children are using them one at a time or increase privacy (e.g. partitions, stalls, curtains).

Ensure all diapering surfaces are non-porous.

Please ensure any classroom food service activities are happening on designated clean and sanitized food surfaces (e.g. carts, counters). Also, the 3-sink method is required for any place dishes are being washed by hand (e.g. room 212).

Consider increasing shelving or storage for room materials (e.g. room 212).

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A full license is issued. Thank you for the visit.

*Note: If you are the Child Care Center Director and you feel something is unclear or unjustly cited, please contact your DHS Licensing Consultant to discuss the issue. The child care director may also send a response which will be placed in the licensing file.

*Note: If you are a member of the general public, there may be additional information contained in the public file. You may contact the DHS Licensing Consultant to inquire.